

is a bill brought to me by the Department of Health regarding home health services. It affects not only state government's ability to provide this service but also local municipalities. What has happened is in the area of nursing services both the state and local governments have been allowed to employ nurses to provide immunizations and different types of services or in some cases to contract for those services. What has happened is in the last few years we have developed a new area of nursing services and that is home health services, having nurses go to perhaps the elderly or those who are physically handicapped in their home and provide home health services to those individuals. The language in the statute under LB 389 would allow cities, counties, villages and townships to contract for these types of services in addition to the current list of services they are now able to provide in terms of nursing care. This provision also allows the department to likewise hire and/or contract to provide these services. Now, what the focus is right now at this point with LB 389 is in southwest Nebraska, in the counties of Chase, Hayes, Hitchcock and Dundy, I think all of those are in Senator Haberman's district, they did set up, under a federal contract back a few years ago, home health services for that area of the state. They weren't getting the services. They weren't being provided. The federal government provided a contract to the State Health Department to start up services and those services were initiated and are now ongoing. The contract has expired but, once the start-up costs were paid and the thing was in motion, reimbursements and fees have covered the cost and so that program in those counties can continue without any additional monies, either federal or state monies, directly appropriated to that program. But to keep that program going, it was found that the statutes didn't specifically provide for that type of service and so this bill was introduced. And, again, it does not just affect the state but the cities and counties, et cetera, would also be allowed expanded services through home health contracts if they so desired. So, with that fairly brief explanation, I would ask for advancement of LB 389, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Haberman, please.

SENATOR HABERMAN: Mr. President and members of the body, I would like to wholeheartedly support LB 389. And this is a case of...that does affect southwest Nebraska and my counties and I will admit I have a very personal interest in this. However, this is a case of western Nebraska or southwestern Nebraska taking care of themselves. We are not asking for any funds. We